





# From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

## Racist in our midst

*Actor: I want to specify that abortion to help a minority group, would that be possible?*

*Planned Parenthood employee: Absolutely.*

*Actor: Like the black community for example?*

*Planned Parenthood employee: Certainly.*

*Actor: The abortion — I can give money specifically for a black baby, that would be the purpose?*

*Planned Parenthood employee: Absolutely. If you wanted to designate that your gift be used to help an African-American woman in need, then we would certainly make sure that the gift was earmarked for that purpose.*

*Actor: Great, because I really faced trouble with affirmative action, and I don't want my kids to be disadvantaged against black kids. I just had a baby; I want to put it in his name.*

*Planned Parenthood employee: Yes, absolutely.*

*Actor: And we don't, you know we just think, the less black kids out there the better.*

*Planned Parenthood employee: (Laughs) Understandable, understandable.*

*Actor: Right. I want to protect my son, so he can get into college.*

*Planned Parenthood employee: All right. Excuse my hesitation, this is the first time I've had a donor call and make this kind of request, so I'm excited, and want to make sure I don't leave anything out.*

**T**hat transcript is from a telephone call made to a Planned Parenthood office by an actor working for a student journalist at a pro-life magazine distributed on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles. The student journalist, Lila Rose, made several similar calls to Planned Parenthood offices around the country, and exposed the organization's racism and greed nearly every time.

Rose went on to found the pro-life group, Live Action, and continues her undercover and behind-the-scenes investigations into the deep-rooted evil that is Planned Parenthood — and the abortion industry in general.

You don't read about Lila Rose and her work in the mainstream news media, do you? Likewise, you probably didn't get to read about the large group of pro-life, African-American pastors who protested Planned Parenthood's racism outside the organization's national headquarters in Washington D.C., after they learned the results of Lila Rose's undercover investigation.

Read it here, then: Planned Parenthood, the recipient of more than \$540 million annually in federal government funding (translation: your tax money), is a racist organization and has been since its earliest days. No rational person who has studied the history of Planned Parenthood can believe otherwise. Its founder was a rabid racist by the name of Margaret Sanger, who coined the word "eugenics" to explain her philosophy that lesser forms of mankind like Negroes should not be allowed to proliferate beyond control.

"We do not want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population," she famously wrote in 1939 — the same year she began her Negro Project.

Lila Rose's telephone inquiries would indicate that Sanger's Planned Parenthood, which exterminated over 327,000 babies last year, hasn't changed its philosophy in the nearly 76 years since Sanger forthrightly proclaimed the organization's mission.

Of course, Planned Parenthood argues that their beloved founder is being quoted out of context, and that at any rate the organization is no longer under the control of Sanger, who died in 1966.

Really? If Planned Parenthood has changed it ways, why is it that the organization locates nearly 80% of its "clinics" today in minority neighborhoods? Why are 35% of all abortions in this country performed on African-Americans, who comprise only 13% of the population? Why do half of all African-American pregnancies end in abortions? (Statistics courtesy of the Idaho Values Alliance.)

In this present day of increasing racial hostility and accusations of racism in America, we're overlooking one of the most obvious offenders: the abortion industry.

The secular news media don't have the courage to tell us this story. Most (but certainly not all) politicians are also afraid to take on this issue. Judges cringe. People are uncomfortable even talking about it. The general population yawns.

Saddest of all, many Christians have turned their backs as well over fifty million of our fellow human beings, of all races, have been slaughtered in the womb as if they are a pestilence.

Why can't we change that?

# Welcome the good days

**W**hile straightening the shelves at our LifeWay Christian Store in Fort Worth one day during the winter, I looked up and saw a lady in the Bible section who looked completely lost. I went over to her and asked if I could help.

Asking some additional questions, I learned she wanted a Bible but had never read one before or even been to church. She was starting from square one. I then began to explain to her what kind of book the Bible is — a uniquely inspired one — and why it's so important for us to read it.

She seemed receptive. She said she had looked at some of the student Bibles but just didn't know which one to get, so we walked back over to the student Bibles and I showed her a life application Bible — the one that first helped me understand the Scriptures and learn how to apply them to my life. After showing her some of its various features, she said she loved it and took it into her hands.

The whole time talking with her, all I could hear in my head was Jesus saying, "Tell her about Me. Tell her about Me," so I walked her over to a quiet corner in the Bible section and began to share Jesus with her.

After I had explained the Gospel, I began to tell her a little bit of my own story. As it turned out, she and I shared a similar struggle and I could see that what I was saying was resonating with her. I went on to tell her about the freedom I had found in Christ, and how I now had peace and joy where there had once been anger and bitterness.

We set off across the store, talking about how God's forgiveness enables us to forgive others and how we all desperately need God's forgiveness. I told her about how Jesus wants to come into our lives and take away the anger, bitterness, and sadness, and replace it with His love, joy, and peace. I told her Jesus wants her to know Him, and all she had to do was turn to Him in faith, asking for His forgiveness, and He would come into her life forever.

Then I asked her if she wanted to know Jesus like I did, and she said she did. Right in the middle of the store on



**Guest opinion**  
with Patricia James

"Sometimes I get discouraged when I feel like we're not making a big enough impact, but then there are days when I get to witness God change a customer's life through our ministry at LifeWay. Thankfully, these days far outweigh the others and remind me to keep serving God faithfully in the down times knowing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain."

a Saturday afternoon, she asked Jesus to come into her life. When she said "Amen" and looked up at me, the anger and bitterness had disappeared from her eyes and only peace remained.

Sometimes I get discouraged when I feel like we're not making a big enough impact, but then there are days when I get to witness God change a customer's life through our ministry at LifeWay. Thankfully, these days far outweigh the others and remind me to keep serving God faithfully in the down times knowing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*James is an associate at the Fort Worth (Texas) LifeWay Christian Store. This article first appeared in the LifeWay employee publication Lifelines, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.*

## THE BaptistRecord

### Editor

William H. Perkins Jr.  
[wperkins@mbcb.org](mailto:wperkins@mbcb.org)

### Associate Editor

Tony Martin  
[tmartin@mbcb.org](mailto:tmartin@mbcb.org)

### Layout/Design

Megan Young  
[myoung@mbcb.org](mailto:myoung@mbcb.org)

### Advertising

Emily Jones  
[ejones@mbcb.org](mailto:ejones@mbcb.org)

### Circulation Manager

Brenda Quattlebaum  
[bquattlebaum@mbcb.org](mailto:bquattlebaum@mbcb.org)

### Editor Emeritus

Don McGregor

### Baptist Record Advisory Committee:

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**Send news, communication, and address changes to:** The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

**Tel:** (601) 968-3800  
**Fax:** (601) 292-3330  
**E-mail:** [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org)

### BAPTISTS

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# Baseball a special language for sharing Gospel

LIMA, Peru (BP) — A rope isn't typical baseball gear, but Florida Baptist volunteer Josh Howard, who was headed for a baseball clinic in Lima, Peru, had good reason for packing a very, very long one in his suitcase.

He would speak of eternity to a group of kids living in the moment to become better baseball players, using a rope for a visual illustration that he learned listening to the teaching of evangelical pastor Francis Chan.

Howard was there with seven other former and current high school, college, and professional baseball players and coaches — all from Southern Baptist churches in Florida and Tennessee.

In late 2009, International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Tim and Joy Mitchell from Georgia could hardly foresee what God was up to when asked one simple question at a Florida missions conference: "Do they play baseball in Peru?"

Tim didn't know the answer right away, but when he returned home to Lima he started making contacts. He got acquainted with Peru's baseball federation, which hosts a league for young players and a national team.

In the process, he discovered that most of the federation's leaders are Nikkei — Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Less than one percent of Peruvians are Nikkei and has a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Later, a Tennessee Baptist volunteer, who decades ago tore his shoulder weeks before his big-league tryout with the Cincinnati Reds, joined up with Tim in Peru to investigate the possibility of using baseball clinics as a bridge to share the Gospel.

Peru's baseball federation welcomed their help. The federation's president and a second-generation Nikkei said he hoped they could make a major leaguer out of some of their own young players. He was also open to them sharing Bible stories and testimonies, believing boys today need to be molded with morals.

The idea for that first baseball clinic wasn't part of an existing strategy for making disciples in Lima, Tim noted, but some would contend it was part of God's plan.

In the five years since their inception, the clinics have opened doors for sharing the Gospel with countless players, parents, coaches, and officials. During this year's clinic alone 142 people accepted Christ, most of them non-Japanese Peruvians.

It's yet to be determined if five years has been long enough to make a Major League Baseball player out of any of the boys, but it's proved sufficient time for some self-professed "washed-up," one-time baseball standouts to consider themselves friends with Lima's aspiring baseball stars.

Those friendships have built bridges for sharing the Gospel



**LOVE FOR THE GAME** — Former major leaguers Kevin Ohm   (left) and Tommy Phelps (right) huddle with a Peruvian little league team after a game in Lima, Peru. Ohm   and Phelps, both from First Church, Brandon, Fla., were in Lima with six other baseball-experienced, Southern Baptist volunteers to help players improve their skills and to share the Gospel. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

## Prayer requests

■ Pray for the 142 baseball players, parents, and coaches who accepted Christ during baseball clinics held in mid-January in Lima. Pray they will stand firm and grow in their faith.

■ Ask God to call out more baseball-skilled Christian volunteers to help lead future clinics among young baseball players in Peru.

■ Pray that Peruvian baseball federation leaders will respond in faith to the Gospel message they've heard during the past five years of baseball clinics.

■ Pray that believers and churches will commit to pray for Peruvian baseball players and to build long-term relationships with them.

To join the Mitchells' prayer team, email them at [tcmsbox@gmail.com](mailto:tcmsbox@gmail.com).

with non-Japanese Peruvians. The friendships have been especially important in knocking down "roadblocks" to the Nikkei.

Reaching the Nikkei with the Gospel is distinct because they ascribe less value to what someone tells them and focus more on the form in which it's communicated through actions, Tim said. Just as the baseball volunteers are eyeing the young players' technique to see if they're major league material, the Nikkei are watching rather than just listening to how the team shares the Gospel.

When the volunteers give a public invitation to accept Christ, maybe one or two Nikkei will raise their hand to show a decision and may only hold them shoulder high. Rooted in Shinto and Bud-



**WAY TO GO** — Tommy Phelps (right), former pitcher for the Florida Marlins during their 2003 World Series championship season, high-fives a local little leaguer during a baseball clinic in Lima, Peru. Nearby, Kevin Ohm  , former pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, and other baseball coaches greet players. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

dhist beliefs, their worldview has no Creator God, Tim said.

"You don't just come in with the traditional Roman Road Gospel presentation. The Nikkei are not going to listen to what you say until they see you living it out," Tim said. "That's how baseball has a ministry context. It speaks more than words... Each step taken at the clinic is an exclamation point on the Gospel."

Kevin Ohm  , former pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, said the volunteer team went beyond the initial sowing of Gospel seeds. "We're like the fertilizer," said Ohm   at a Lima baseball field before a clinic held this past January. "Every year we come and we've planted the year before, and Tim has watered all year long."

"We come and help them grow some more. What keeps me coming back now is the relationships... We come now because they're our friends..."

Jorge, a young player who's been attending the clinics for the past few years, interrupted Ohm  , calling him over to "talk shop" before the day's activities began. He's much more familiar with Ohm   now as his perennial coach than as a former major league hurler.

Though Ohm   and his teammates shared Bible stories and testimonies at the end of each day's clinic, they also taught the players about the Gospel while coaching them in baseball techniques.

Tommy Phelps, who pitched with the Florida Marlins dur-

ing their 2003 World Series championship season and now coaches for one of the New York Yankees' minor league teams, told the pitchers, "To become great, you have to throw with intent, with purpose."

Volunteer Sonny Hester, who may or may not have realized he was preaching a mini-sermon, told the catchers, "Home plate is never going to change. It's always going to be here. The only thing that will change is how you position yourself toward it."

While these players hear Gospel truths from volunteers, visiting parents also listen in.

"One of the main things that stood out to me was the openness of the parents [to the Gospel]," said volunteer Chris Pennell.

One day a mother named Carolina stood behind the baseball players while Howard, the repeat-flighting Florida Baptist volunteer, shared his testimony. "She had heard about God and Jesus many times from her Catholic friends, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Mormons. What she had heard from these folks did not make sense [to her]," related IMB missionary Joy Mitchell, "but she understood what [Howard] was saying that she was a sinner and needed Christ in her life."

Carolina committed her life to Christ that day. She was one of at least 18 parents who made that decision during the five-day clinic. In fact, two mothers received a double blessing when they and their sons accepted Christ on the same day.

There were other signs of God at work. Returning volunteers noticed an increased spiritual openness among the federation's leaders.

A federation official who Tim said couldn't be found during testimony time at the initial clinic, later stood on the field during the presentations. He even encouraged players to listen. He also accepted a Bible storybook set that Tim gave him for his children. Later, the official asked Tim for another one, saying his son and daughter were fighting over the one.

Meanwhile, Howard reflected on the spiritual victories he's seen on Lima's baseball fields — ones that might not have happened by inviting people to a steamed building.

"We are seeding relationships. The defensive posture is down because we're not in a church. We share our testimonies [of] how God used sports in our lives, and they've been incredibly receptive," Howard said.

Though Howard was offered plenty of college baseball scholarships and keeps company with similar high-level talent, he said these once sought-after baseball players aren't offering anything extraordinary. "It's just obedience. Some people go across the street. Some people go across the world," he said.



## The 'Whosoever Will' of Easter

In just a few days the Christian community encircling the globe will be celebrating the death of Jesus on the cross and His triumphant, glorious resurrection three days later. It is the pinnacle picture of God's good news to us. It is the heart of the Gospel as Jesus gave His life for us and then overcame death and all that would overcome us because of our sins. But for whom is this good news proclaimed? There's no better word found in Scripture than at the close of the book in Revelation 22:17, for the word is "whosoever." That verse proclaims, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." For whom did Jesus die and who can come to the cross and be saved? Well, according to Scripture, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). He died for all. He died for you and me. He died for the sins of the world, and so as we approach this Easter, everybody, you see, everybody you know, ever have known, ever will know is one of the whosoever will may come folks.

I got to thinking about the whosoever wills and was overwhelmed in trying to see how big as I thought about all of the people who would fit into the whosoever will plan of God to save. Take just a few moments at this Easter preparation time and walk through the alphabet of the whosoever wills:

- Affluent, Alienated, Aching
- Burdened, Broken, Bruised, Boastful
- Contaminated, Condemned, Contentious, Conscientious
- Desperate, Discouraged, Disengaged, Druggie, Drunkard
- Excluded, Expelled, Extravagant, Extrovert
- Fun-loving, Frustrated, Failure, Forgiven
- Goober, Glamour Queen, Gardner
- Hobo, Housewife, Honor Student, Hungry, Hulk, Helpless
- Introverted, Intellect, Inquisitive
- Junkie, Jilted, Jerk
- Klumsy, Krude, Kantakerous, Konflicted
- Lover, Loser, Looney
- Majestic, Marred, Mourning, Married
- Noteworthy, Ne'er-do-well, Nutty, Neglected
- Overrated, Overextended, Overlooked, Overbearing
- Pretender, Perverted, Pompous
- Questioning, Quotable, Quiet
- Rouge, Rowdy, Regal, Runt
- Searching, Struggling, Snubbed, Soured
- Troubled, Trampled, Torn, Touched
- Unappreciated, Unqualified, Underrated
- Vicious, Vulnerable, Vagabond
- Wicked, Winsome, Wounded, Wandering
- X-troverted, X-plosive, X-cluded
- Young, Yearning, Yokes, Yahoos
- Zoned In, Zoned Out, Zero

All of these are whosoever wills and somewhere in this list you might jot your name alongside and realize that when Jesus died on the cross and paid for the sins of the world, He paid for yours and it was Him who said in John 6:37, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He is not going to reject you. This Easter will be the greatest you ever spent if even this very day you will say, "Lord Jesus, come into my heart today. Forgive me of all my sins. Give me life everlasting. I trust you and I welcome you as my Lord and Savior. Amen."

# Navy chaplain, accused of intolerance, faces dismissal

**GOOSE CREEK, S.C. (BP)** — The attorney who represents 65 former chaplains suing the U.S. Navy for discrimination says the potential dismissal of a chaplain for giving traditional biblical counsel is evidence of a continuing attack against evangelical Christians.

For Virginia attorney Arthur Schulz, the charge of "intolerance" leveled against Navy chaplain Wesley Modder shows how once-subtle discrimination against evangelical chaplains is increasing. The 65 chaplains' cases continue to be waged in various courts alleging instances of discrimination dating back to the mid-1970s.

Modder is a veteran of nearly 20 years in the military, including a four-year tour of duty with the Marines. On Feb. 17, his commanding officer sent Modder a letter calling for the chaplain's "detachment for cause."

Capt. Jon Fahs said Modder is unable to function in a diverse and pluralistic environment at the Naval Nuclear Power Training Command base in Goose Creek, S.C. Fahs' accusations include Modder allegedly telling a student she was "shaming herself" for engaging in premarital sex; berating another unmarried student for getting pregnant; and telling another that homosexuality is wrong.

"He failed to show tolerance and respect for the rights of individuals to determine their own religious convictions as required...," Fahs wrote. "On multiple occasions he discriminated against students who were of different faiths and backgrounds" at the Nuclear Field "A" School.

Stationed at the South Carolina post since last April, Modder has been temporarily reassigned as a staff chaplain at Naval Support Activity in Charleston, S.C., according to Christianne Witten, a spokesperson for the Navy Chaplain Corps.

The Navy's action against Modder falls in the context of recent National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) language that protects the chaplain's right to speak on matters of religion and morality, Schulz said.

"There is the alleged taking of information from Modder's personal files for the purpose of attacking him," Schulz said. "That is clearly a violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, yet they're attacking Chaplain Modder, not the perpetrators. Now, the subtle attacks have transitioned to overt attacks. You have to understand the chilling effect this kind of attack has on other chaplains."

Mike Berry, an attorney for Modder with the Dallas-based Liberty Institute, said the complaints lodged against Modder are "highly suspicious."

One of the allegations came



**UNDER FIRE** — U.S. Navy Chaplain Wes Modder displays the ceremonial oar given to him by Naval Special Warfare Command in San Diego, Ca., upon completion of a recent deployment. The 20-year veteran chaplain could be dismissed over allegations that he does not treat non-Christian points of view with respect. (BP photo)

from a young officer who had once worked in the same office with Modder and quite likely knew of his beliefs, said Berry, Liberty Institute's senior counsel and director of military affairs.

"The actions the Navy has taken so far, particularly Fahs, potentially expose the Navy to liability in federal court for denying a chaplain his constitutional rights," Berry said.

After receiving Fahs' letter, Modder filed a request for accommodation of his religious views, which the Navy subsequently denied. Berry said the next step is filing appeals with the admirals responsible for overseeing these issues.

Berry said his client will challenge both the planned dismissal and the alleged infringement on his religious rights. The attorney said those are separate issues and likely to be decided by two different admirals.

The latter is especially significant, Berry said. Under previous Department of Defense (DoD) regulations, the burden fell on a service member to justify his/her religious expression — such as a Jewish soldier wanting to wear a yarmulke, Berry said.

NDAA legislation in fiscal 2013 and 2014 directed the DoD to change its regulations, Berry said. The new law places the burden on the military if it tries to restrict individuals from expressing their religious views — which is what the Navy is trying to do with Modder, the attorney said.

However, Witten replied that the Navy is complying with current DoD and Navy policies and the NDAA's latest provisions. She said the Navy upholds the rights of conscience of chaplains and service members to express sincerely held beliefs.

"Upon commissioning, all Navy chaplains agree to serve in a diverse and pluralistic environment," Witten said. "They are expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect, irrespective of differences in religious belief."

Modder's case has attracted statements of support from such leaders as evangelist Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse, Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, and newly-announced Republican presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas.

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# THE Baptist Record

SPECIAL EDITION

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**JIM FUTRAL**  
EXECUTIVE  
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We are only ten short years away from celebrating the 100th year of the beginning of the Cooperative Program in Southern Baptist life. Southern Baptists have always been a great mission hearted people and through our veins have flowed resources of prayer and people and money so that the ends of the earth might hear the good news of our Lord Jesus. Never has any organization ever had such a powerful vehicle that would enable us to carry out the commission given to us by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. Here is the question that the church has faced through the years. How can we carry the Gospel everywhere all the time all at the same time? While there are many answers to that question that could be given, none has proven to be as effective and far reaching as the Cooperative Program.

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LEE ROYCE

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Thank you again, Mississippi Baptists, for your generosity through the Cooperative Program.



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We are so grateful for the Mississippi Baptist churches that support the Cooperative Program and all of the ministries that depend upon it, including Christian education.



**RORY LEE**

DIRECTOR, BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Many times I have said that I wish there were no need for the services of The Baptist Children's Village—that every child could have their own wonderful Christian home with their own birth family. Unfortunately, that is not the case. In addition to continuing to provide residential care for children who cannot be with their own families, The BCV has become much more proactive in the area of keeping families together.

In addition to our seven residential campuses, we have also implemented the Dorcas Program to provide services that help keep struggling families together. Since Dorcas was established to help families who were at the point of disruption and collapse, 98% of the families in the program have been able to keep their child from going into state custody. Today, well over 300 children are at home with their own families because of the Dorcas Program.

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| LAWRENCE/CARMEL         | 7,538.66  |
| SHARKEY/SSAQ/DEER CREEK | 7,285.59  |
| WINSTON/DRY CREEK       | 7,090.00  |

\$ 75,000 - \$99,999

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH      | CP GIFTS  |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| CALHOUN/PLEASANT HILL   | 15,095.70 |
| CALHOUN/SABOUGLA        | 14,695.82 |
| YAZOO/OAK GROVE         | 13,579.79 |
| MISSISSIPPI/CROSBY      | 13,083.00 |
| MISSISSIPPI/MT VERNON   | 12,038.00 |
| TISHOMINGO/NEW PROSPECT | 11,361.44 |
| WEBSTER/OLLARS GROVE    | 10,895.29 |
| CHOCTAW/WEIR            | 10,722.94 |
| ATTALA/MCCOOL           | 10,538.38 |
| WARREN/NORTHSIDE        | 10,205.00 |

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR GIFTS TO TOP 10 CHURCH GIFTS TO THE C

## REGION 1

### ASSOCIATION/CHURCH

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH        | CP GIFTS   |
|---------------------------|------------|
| NORTH CENTRAL/EMMANUEL    | 185,159.82 |
| MONTGOMERY/FBC WINONA     | 169,548.90 |
| MID-DELTA/NORTH GREENWOOD | 143,247.54 |
| MID-DELTA/FBC CLEVELAND   | 122,238.75 |
| MID-DELTA/FBC GREENVILLE  | 109,747.60 |
| NORTH DELTA/OAKHURST      | 78,972.26  |
| NORTH CENTRAL/FBC GRENADE | 63,616.21  |
| MID-DELTA/FBC GREENWOOD   | 53,264.89  |
| MID-DELTA/FBC INDIANOLA   | 50,304.27  |
| CARROLL/VAIDEN            | 50,132.86  |

## REGION 2

### ASSOCIATION/CHURCH

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH             | CP GIFTS   |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| LEE/HARRISBURG                 | 475,274.92 |
| GOLDEN TRIANGLE/FAIRVIEW       | 340,842.21 |
| LAFAYETTE/FBC OXFORD           | 292,127.85 |
| GOLDEN TRIANGLE/FBC STARKVILLE | 273,059.03 |
| LAFAYETTE/NORTH OXFORD         | 260,745.74 |
| ALCORN/FBC CORINTH             | 239,648.88 |
| PANOIA/FBC BATESVILLE          | 216,265.38 |
| LEE/FBC TUPELO                 | 202,538.02 |
| X-TENDED/LONGVIEW HEIGHTS      | 200,278.94 |
| LEE/CAVALRY                    | 184,398.71 |

## REGION 3

### ASSOCIATION/CHURCH

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH     | CP GIFTS   |
|------------------------|------------|
| METRO/FBC JACKSON      | 869,457.76 |
| METRO/BROADMOOR        | 523,000.00 |
| METRO/MORRISON HEIGHTS | 423,164.18 |
| METRO/FBC MADISON      | 386,139.09 |
| RANKIN/FBC BRANDON     | 266,527.00 |
| METRO/COLONIAL HEIGHTS | 256,432.41 |
| METRO/FBC CLINTON      | 197,634.76 |
| LINCOLN/FBC BROOKHAVEN | 180,688.83 |
| RANKIN/BANDON          | 167,356.44 |
| ADAMS/FBC NATCHEZ      | 144,595.23 |

JIM PHILLIPS  
PASTOR, NORTH GREENWOOD CHURCH

I was not raised as a Southern Baptist, so my own education about the Cooperative Program has been a process. When I began to realize how my own personal giving to my church could bless beyond my own fellowship, I was inspired to do more. I think the CP is one of the best ideas God ever gave a denomination. As a pastor, I want my own church to see beyond its immediate church field to the bigger picture of "going into all the world to preach the gospel." The Cooperative Program enables us to make that a reality. That is also why, two years ago I led our own church to increase its giving through the 1% Challenge. God's Spirit prompted our church family to more than meet our own needs so we could be faithful all the more. I challenge my fellow pastors to do the same.

DAVID ELDREDGE  
PASTOR, FBC CLINTON

First Baptist Clinton, gives through the Cooperative Program because we believe that the various agencies it supports are faith-filled Great Commission ministries. Our church's primary calling is to equip believers to make disciples beginning in Clinton and moving to the ends of the earth. We embrace this calling and are prayerfully growing in our faithfulness to engage our city and beyond. With that embrace comes a humble recognition that the Great Commission cannot be faithfully accomplished by one church in isolation from other churches and ministries. Mutual support and partnership provides the pathway to greater faithfulness and fruitfulness. As a pastor, I know of no better way to partner with other churches and organizations to engage the darkness of this world than to cooperate together as Southern Baptists to reach this world. I believe in giving through the Cooperative Program because it is a faithful path to support and further Great Commission work.

RANDY TURNER

PASTOR, FBC LAUREL

The "team" concept found its way into my life fairly early. As I played sports on teams, I began to realize how much more you can accomplish together than you can alone. Someone defined TEAM as Together Everyone Accomplishes More. That is so true.

When I came here 23 years ago, we at First Baptist Laurel made a commitment as pastor and people to never go below a fifth of our total receipts to the Cooperative Program. We are currently at 11%, but would like to raise that number incrementally until we are at 15%. Around here, we are constantly emphasizing "not equal gifts but equal sacrifice." When that happens, the smallest church, the largest church and every church in between combines to make an impact for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom that is of Global Significance.

At Mississippi College, my good friend Randall O'Brien and I were playing intra-mural basketball. One night, Randall scored 35 points. I got six. When we returned to the dorm, he told our friends that he and I combined for 41 points. I felt ten feet tall!

Through the Cooperative Program we can all contribute what we have to offer. We can combine our efforts and cooperatively make a difference for all eternity.



# TO THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM!

## COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BY REGION

### REGION 4

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH           | CP GIFTS   |
|------------------------------|------------|
| ATLANTA/FBC KOSCIUSKO        | 174,185.11 |
| LAUDERDALE/POPLAR SPRINGS DR | 141,359.65 |
| WINSTON/FBC LOUISVILLE       | 136,128.90 |
| LAUDERDALE/NORTHCREST        | 133,484.39 |
| LAUDERDALE/FBC MERIDIAN      | 128,917.72 |
| LAUDERDALE/HIGHLAND          | 123,979.87 |
| LAUDERDALE/FBC COLLINSVILLE  | 116,067.17 |
| NEWTON/FBC NEWTON            | 100,071.25 |
| NEWTON/CLARKE VENABLE        | 92,648.27  |
| CLARKE/FBC QUITMAN           | 88,876.72  |

### REGION 5

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH           | CP GIFTS   |
|------------------------------|------------|
| PIKE/FBC SUMMIT              | 231,104.16 |
| JONES/FBC LAUREL             | 213,483.16 |
| MARION/FBC COLUMBIA          | 200,495.62 |
| PINE BELT/TEMPLE HATTIESBURG | 189,999.96 |
| PEARL RIVER/FBC PICAYUNE     | 145,918.89 |
| GULF COAST/FBC GULPORT       | 140,974.00 |
| PINE BELT/PETAL HARVEY       | 137,242.00 |
| PINE BELT/CARTERVILLE        | 133,699.18 |
| JONES/FBC ELLISVILLE         | 131,727.35 |
| GULF COAST/FBC BILOXI        | 125,153.94 |

### AT LARGE

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH           | CP GIFTS  |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| AT LARGE/GRACE CITY CHURCH   | 21,163.72 |
| AT LARGE/JOURNEY             | 11,957.00 |
| AT LARGE/THE COMMUNITY CH    | 10,629.41 |
| AT LARGE/THE BEGINNINGS CH   | 10,281.41 |
| AT LARGE/LIFEPOINT TUNICA    | 8,132.78  |
| AT LARGE/NORTH RIDGE CHURCH  | 7,842.77  |
| AT LARGE/EXCHANGE CHURCH     | 7,033.00  |
| AT LARGE/GRACE FELLOWSHIP    | 6,789.49  |
| AT LARGE/CHINESE GRACE BIBLE | 4,371.40  |
| AT LARGE/BASILEIA CHURCH     | 4,142.06  |

## CENTURY CLUB

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY \$ 100,000 - \$149,999

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH        | CP.GIFTS  |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| MONTGOMERY/BETHSAIDA      | 27,009.44 |
| PONTOTOC/ALGOMA           | 15,268.41 |
| METRO/MIDWAY              | 14,931.89 |
| SMITH/LEAF RIVER          | 14,577.81 |
| LAWRENCE/OLD SILVER CREEK | 14,436.77 |
| CLARKIE/SHUBUTA           | 14,320.78 |
| BENTON-TIPPAH/LOWREY MEM. | 14,258.83 |
| CLARKE/ROLLING CREEK      | 13,809.51 |
| MISSISSIPPI/FBC GALILEE   | 13,618.17 |
| LINCOLN/BETHEL            | 13,518.59 |

### \$ 150,000 - \$249,999

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH        | CP.GIFTS  |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| LINCOLN/NEW PROSPECT      | 44,272.56 |
| PIKE/TERRY'S CREEK        | 37,213.67 |
| ADAMS/CLIFF TEMPLE        | 35,265.59 |
| RANKIN/PUCKETT            | 33,093.94 |
| PEARL RIVER/JUNIPER GROVE | 32,961.42 |
| NEWTON/CHUNKY             | 32,561.76 |
| WINSTON/NOXAPATER         | 32,522.98 |
| PONTOTOC/ECRU             | 29,356.78 |
| LEE/BREWER                | 27,649.77 |
| MARION/CEDAR GROVE        | 25,882.42 |

### \$ 250,000 - \$499,999

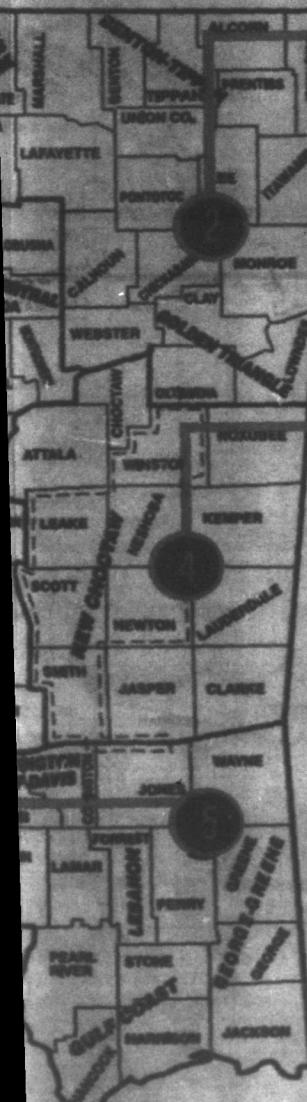
| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH      | CP.GIFTS  |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| RANKIN/PELAHATCHIE      | 64,187.20 |
| LINCOLN/PLEASANT GROVE  | 60,619.13 |
| PIKE/CENTRAL            | 58,826.80 |
| COV/JEFF DAV/PRENTISS   | 56,554.67 |
| COV/JEFF DAV/WHITE SAND | 55,445.97 |
| METRO/POCAHONTAS        | 52,803.43 |
| LAUDERDALE/WESTWOOD     | 50,903.51 |
| CARROLL/VAIDEN          | 50,132.86 |
| LAWRENCE/SHILOH         | 48,870.56 |
| SCOTT/SPRINGFIELD       | 47,344.69 |

### \$ 500,000 - \$999,999

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH          | CP.GIFTS   |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| MONTGOMERY/FBC WINONA       | 169,548.90 |
| LAUDERDALE/FBC COLLINSVILLE | 116,067.17 |
| CHICKASAW/FBC HOUSTON       | 111,405.25 |
| LAWRENCE/MONTICELLO         | 106,137.10 |
| MARION/BUNKER HILL          | 105,290.43 |
| PIKE/FBC MCCOMB             | 104,867.96 |
| NEWTON/FBC NEWTON           | 100,071.25 |
| JONES/INDIAN SPRINGS        | 97,865.29  |
| RANKIN/MCLAURIN HEIGHTS     | 95,926.58  |
| SIMPSON/FBC MAGEE           | 93,979.14  |

### \$1,000,000 and UP

| ASSOCIATION/CHURCH           | CP.GIFTS   |
|------------------------------|------------|
| METRO/FBC JACKSON            | 869,457.76 |
| METRO/BROADMOOR              | 523,000.00 |
| LEE/HARRISBURG               | 475,274.92 |
| METRO/MORRISON HEIGHTS       | 423,164.18 |
| METRO/FBC MADISON            | 386,139.09 |
| GOLD TRIANGLE/FAIRVIEW       | 340,842.21 |
| LAUDERDALE/FBC OXFORD        | 292,127.85 |
| GOLD TRIANGLE/FBC STARKVILLE | 273,059.03 |
| RANKIN/FBC BRANDON           | 266,527.00 |
| METRO/COLONIAL HEIGHTS       | 256,432.41 |



### ERIC HANKINS

PASTOR, FBC OXFORD

We celebrate and support the Cooperative Program at FBC-Oxford because it provides us with gospel participation as far off as Kuala Lumpur and as close as the Ole Miss BSU, just a few blocks away. Such kingdom impact would never be conceivable through our congregation alone, but in concert with 46,000 SBC churches, and in state-focused partnership with over 2000 MBCB churches, God takes our small gift and makes it much. I frequently tell our congregation that the 12.5% of our budget that goes to CP is the best money we give all year because it supplies us a share in world-changing missions and ministry of unparalleled breadth and depth in an unprecedented time of Great Commission need and opportunity. When we give through CP, lost people all over our state and all over the world hear about Jesus. There's no better motivation for FBC-Oxford than that.

### BARRY CORBETT

PASTOR, FBC KOSCIUSKO

For the church to succeed in our Lord's call to His Great Commission, will always require God called, Spirit filled individuals who not only hear His call, but also surrender to it with boldness. It will also require God's body, the church, to be committed to His Great Commission. The church must take seriously the task of praying, encouraging, training and supporting those who have answered God's call. I believe First Baptist Church Kosciusko, has been and is today effective and efficient in accomplishing God's call through its commitment and support of the Cooperative Program through the following ways:

- Praying for those who are called by God.
- Encouraging and training the generations in the church so that they may be able to hear and respond to God's call.
- Providing our church the opportunities to experience missions first hand as described in Acts 1:8.
- Giving sacrificially through the Cooperative Program for the glory of God's Name alone being made great.

### DAVID HEDERMAN

PASTOR, GRACE CITY CHURCH

Grace City contributes to the Cooperative Program because this is one way our church tries to obey Christ's command to go into all nations and preach the gospel. By giving to the Cooperative program, our church contributes to the missionaries who are located all over the globe sharing the gospel of Christ. Additionally, we give to the Cooperative Program knowing that this money will also help start new churches here at home and abroad. Ultimately, our involvement in the Cooperative Program is a way for us to stay connected to thousands of churches. Through the Cooperative Program, we know that we are part of a gospel movement that is bigger than our local congregation and bigger than our local community.

# APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup> IS COOPERATIVE PROGRAM SUNDAY

## PLAN A CELEBRATION DAY IN YOUR CHURCH!

RICK BLYTHE

DIRECTOR, STEWARDSHIP/CP PROMOTION



The Cooperative Program is celebrating 90 years of support for Southern Baptist world-wide missions and ministries. Begun in 1925 out of a sense of desperation on how to reach a lost world with the gospel, the Cooperative Program's viability and sustainability is only as strong as the present generation allows. Sadly, the average Southern Baptist has little to no knowledge of how the Cooperative Program works.

Recently, one of our fine pastors asked me to come and speak to the deacons in his church about the Cooperative Program. It seems they had no idea how Cooperative Program dollars are spent and thought their money could be better utilized giving directly to certain mission causes and forego giving through the Cooperative Program. I could tell during the presentation and by the questions asked that their perception of the Cooperative Program was beginning to change. They confessed they had no concept of the far-reaching impact their Cooperative Program gifts were having in the world.

There is little Cooperative Program education being offered today in the average Mississippi Baptist Church. Even if a church no longer has traditional Southern Baptist mission programs [Mission Friend's, RA's, GA's and Acteens], it still needs to have mission's education. We are raising a generation of children and young adults who are unfamiliar with the world-wide impact of the Cooperative Program and are therefore, indifferent to it. This needs to change!

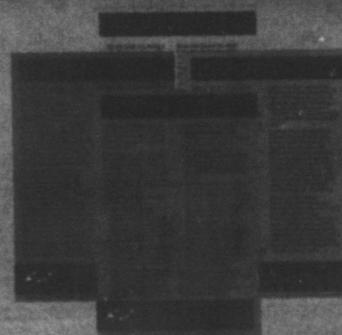
We all know that everything in the church rises or falls based on the support or lack thereof on the part of the pastor. We need pastors who will stand tall for the Cooperative Program. Pastors and church leaders need to become better informed about the missions and ministries supported by the Cooperative Program. Your gifts help support 10,000 international and national missionaries. The Cooperative Program supports six Southern Baptist seminaries and Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College, and William Carey University, which provide quality theological education at a fraction of the normal cost. Through the Cooperative Program, the Mississippi Baptist Convention assists churches in their determination to evangelize without apology. The Cooperative Program helps strengthen existing churches and assist church planters in leadership development. The Cooperative Program helps support the Baptist Children's Village and the Baptist Record.

The Cooperative Program has been an effective giving plan for 90 years and I have yet to hear of a better plan. It is a simple plan allowing any church of any size to participate. There is not a single church in Mississippi that can do alone what we can do together!

Perhaps Dr. Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said it best, "I do not know of a better plan for any church — small, large, new, growing, graying, or ethnic — to accomplish an Acts 1:8 strategy than through the Cooperative Program! Through the Cooperative Program, a church can reach their community, their state, North America, and the Nations, with the gospel... CONSISTENTLY, CONCURRENTLY, AND COMPLETELY."

### RESOURCES

FREE MATERIALS TO HELP YOU PLAN



### 1% CHALLENGE

- Increase your church's cooperative program giving this year by 1% of your church's undesignated receipts. That's a small percentage increase, yet it could produce \$4 million in additional income each year for missions and ministry!

### BULLETIN INSERTS

- Why I Still Believe in the Cooperative Program

TO ORDER YOUR FREE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM RESOURCES  
CALL 601-292-3347 OR VISIT WWW.MBCB.ORG.

### 2015 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM BUDGET



2015 Budget % of Total

|                                       |            |         |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------|
| GLOBAL MISSIONS/SBC                   | 190,992    | 0.610%  |
| ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION | 5,895,104  | 18.652% |
| INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD           | 2,638,009  | 8.432%  |
| NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD          | 346,101    | 1.103%  |
| SBC OPERATING                         | 2,565,084  | 8.199%  |
| THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION                 | 11,575,290 | 37.00%  |

|                                   |           |        |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| CHRISTIAN EDUCATION               | 5,345,472 | 17.09% |
| CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CAPITAL NEEDS | 678,507   | 2.17%  |
| BOARD OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION    | 364,958   | 1.17%  |
| TOTAL                             | 6,388,887 | 20.43% |

|                                    |           |        |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| CHURCH GROWTH MINISTRIES           | 207,498   | 2.76%  |
| DISCIPLESHIP & FAMILY MINISTRY     | 549,148   | 1.30%  |
| CAPITAL NEEDS                      | 405,860   | 1.25%  |
| SUNDAY SCHOOL                      | 390,389   | 1.27%  |
| CHURCH MUSIC                       | 377,454   | 1.19%  |
| CHURCH GROWTH                      | 60,100    | 0.91%  |
| SYNCHRONIZED RELATIONSHIPS / TEAMS | 283,189   | 0.85%  |
| PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT      | 245,280   | 0.99%  |
| STEWARDSHIP                        | 308,241   | 0.74%  |
| EVANGELISM                         | 230,067   | 0.61%  |
| CHURCH-MINISTER RELATIONS          | 3,597,420 | 11.52% |
| TOTAL                              |           |        |

|                                    |           |       |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| STATE BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS      | 840,000   | 2.67% |
| CHURCH RETIREMENT AND PROTECTION   | 425,000   | 2.00% |
| BAPTIST CHILDREN'S VILLAGE         | 397,703   | 1.27% |
| MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION     | 355,308   | 1.14% |
| CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION        | 72,931    | 0.23% |
| HISTORICAL COMMISSION              | 15,000    | 0.05% |
| MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST HEALTH SYSTEMS | 2,305,942 | 7.38% |
| TOTAL                              |           |       |

|                                      |           |       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & COMMUNICATION | 269,922   | 0.86% |
| BUSINESS SERVICES                    | 501,818   | 1.56% |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES                   | 566,152   | 1.81% |
| BAPTIST RECORD                       | 510,178   | 1.63% |
| EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION             | 440,769   | 1.41% |
| COMMUNICATION SERVICES               | 265,746   | 0.85% |
| COMPUTER INFORMATION SERVICES        | 101,200   | 0.32% |
| CONVENTION & CONVENTION COMMITTEES   | 2,655,785 | 8.44% |
| TOTAL                                |           |       |

|                                  |           |        |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| STATE MISSIONS                   | 2,149,559 | 6.87%  |
| COLLEGiate MINISTRY              | 678,731   | 2.17%  |
| WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION         | 555,570   | 1.78%  |
| MEN'S MINISTRY                   | 554,450   | 1.77%  |
| MISSIONS MOBILIZATION            | 308,154   | 0.99%  |
| MISSION STRATEGY                 | 397,401   | 1.27%  |
| CHURCH PLANTING & REVITALIZATION | 117,372   | 0.38%  |
| ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS           | 4,761,237 | 15.23% |
| TOTAL                            |           |        |

Total CP Budget

\$31,284,567 100.00%



The church was barely paying its bills, and occasionally had to dip into its building fund. The church began to fall behind in its Cooperative Program (CP) giving. It had been one of the top churches in the state for per capita CP gifts.

Barry Morris, a faculty member in the School of Education at Baptist-affiliated William Carey University a few miles down Highway 49 in Hattiesburg, was deacon chairman in August 2013. After some research, he discovered that not only was the church behind in CP giving, but on other mission gifts too – the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, Covington-Jeff Davis Association in Collins, a Honduras dental ministry, and other offerings.

"I presented this shortage to the deacons and one of our deacons shared a great testimony. He said, 'For the church, the tithe is sacred. We must catch up.'

The deacons considered CP giving as part of their corporate tithe. After a vote, the deacons determined that every month the church had to receive a certain amount, with the overage going toward "catching up" on CP and other offerings. The amount the church was behind on CP giving alone was \$9,431.34, they calculated.

On the Sunday following the pivotal deacons' meeting, all that information was shared in the church bulletin. The catch-up amount was to come out of the church general budget and not from any special offering. That was a

tall order for a church that had been struggling with its own bills.

However, at the end of the month the church was able to make the first payment, donating \$500 to CP. At the end of the second month, the church gave \$1,000; the third month, \$2,000. By year's end, the church had given an additional \$5,931.34 to CP and reconciled the delinquency.

Astonishingly, the committed congregation had also caught up on giving to the association, the BSU, and the Honduran mission fund. In addition, the church exceeded its own goals for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and the Margaret

Lackey State Missions Offering. All told, the church had given \$13,000.

That's not all. Morris said the church learned of a single mother with four children whose husband was in prison for arson. The family was living in a small travel trailer. The church, with the assistance of several other churches, collected an offering and was able to purchase a \$22,000, four-bedroom mobile home for the family.

The sacrificial giving has continued at First Church, Collins. Through the end of 2014, the church significantly exceeded their special goals for the Annie Armstrong, Lottie Moon, and Margaret Lackey offerings. The church also

gives to the Southern Baptist Convention's World Hunger emphasis, the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union Edwina Robinson Special Day Offering, and the Baptist Children's Village. It gives to local benevolence and community missions in addition to all cited above – and still sends 13% of undesignated gifts to support CP.

The Lord continues to bless the church. According to Frank Gunn, interim pastor for the past 19 months, "On the high side, we were reaching perhaps 20 children on Wednesday nights. Today we are running two vans in double shifts, with about 55 children from kindergarten through sixth grade and 25 teenagers. We

have an active group of 60-75 on Wednesdays."

Approximately 20 volunteers minister to the children.

The deacons and other members are reaching out to the parents of the children, too. "On Wednesdays, we have about one-third white children, one-third African-American, and one-third Hispanic," Morris said.

"The church has baptized its first two African-Americans," Gunn added.

Morris added a final, important note. "Our pastors have been teaching that we have to get outside the church building. We are ministering, but it's the kids who have been evangelizing and bringing their friends to church."

## BIBLIOCRYPTER

MHHZ IVXNPHGKHP SC EWH GVKH

VR TVO, GVVMSCT RVN EWH DHNL

VR VVN GVNO UHPXP LWNSPE XCEV

HEHNCBG GSRH.

UXOH EYHCEI-VCH

*Clue: U = J*

*Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 6:65*

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

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## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR APRIL 5, 2015

## The Declaration • Luke 24:1-12

"He is not here, but is RISEN!" Luke 4:6 (NKJV)

Can you imagine the emotion of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna and other ladies as they went to the tomb to put burial spices on the body of their dear friend Lord Jesus, only to find the tomb empty? Then to be confronted by two men in dazzling apparel who told them, "He is not here, but is risen." What or who should they believe? Could it be true?

There is still much skepticism in our world for those who either refuse to believe, or have such doubts about an event two thousand years ago, they can't believe even though they really want to believe.

Let's consider the evidence.

### The Empty Tomb (Luke 24:1-3)

"Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus" Luke 24:3 (NKJV)

They had been present just three days before when His body was placed there. They saw the stone rolled into place. They knew Roman soldiers had been guarding the tomb constantly. How could this be? This did not make sense to the naked eye. They were deeply puzzled.

Do we get puzzled at the work of God when we do not understand? We often want proof! We want undeniable facts.

### The Risen Lord Declared (Luke 24:4-8)

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Luke 24:5 (NKJV)

The women in despair were suddenly encouraged by two men in shining garments standing before them, "He is not here, but is risen!" Then they said "Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third

day rise again.'" Luke 24: 6-7 Then, THEN "They remembered His words." Luke 24:8

They had doubted until they were reminded of the very words Jesus had spoken.

Are we not of the same mind-set? We so often forget the truth of the word and let situations of doubt overcome us leaving us doubting the things we have been taught to be true?

We must Know what we Believe, and we must BELIEVE what we KNOW.



## Explore the Bible with Kiely D. Young

### The Sure Witnesses (Luke 24:9-12)

Now the circumstances had changed. The ladies had assurance of the resurrection. They went and told the disciples. BUT...the disciples thought the women had experienced wishful thinking. The women wanted to believe, so they did. BUT... "Peter arose and ran to the tomb."

Ah...Peter...he really wanted to believe.

His memories of the past few days were not good. He wanted to see Jesus! He had a hurting heart and he wanted relief.

How many people around us have hurting hearts and desperately want to believe there is hope and a solution to their situation. They are looking for answers, but in all the wrong places. The secular world tells them they just have to work it out for themselves or hide in the world of substance (drugs and alcohol) relief.

Peter went to the tomb, "and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed marveling to himself at what had happened." (Luke 24:12). Peter was looking for real

evidence of the Resurrection. He found not only the empty tomb, but he found the grave cloth as well. He "marveled" at what he saw. That is the result of yearning faith finding reason to believe. He now had no doubt that the words of Christ were true. After three days He would rise again.

We are two thousand years removed from that day. But, today you can have the personal experience, as many have done, to go to Jerusalem and visit the empty tomb! That is the supreme difference in Christianity and all other world religions. The founders of other religions are buried and worshippers go to their grave site to pay tribute. We celebrate our Resurrected Lord and soon to return Lord.

But what is the evidence to believe today? Josh McDowell, a former agnostic, wrote *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. He desperately tried to disprove Christ, the existence of God and the resurrection of Christ. But, rather than disprove, he affirmed and proclaimed his own changed life as confirmation of the resurrection power of Christ.

"He is Risen"! Hallelujah and Amen.

Young is retired Sunday School Director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and a member of Ridgecrest Church, Madison.

## Resurrected Like No Other • Matthew 28:1-10

Jesus is like no other. Our Messiah was covenant-promised prophetically and virgin-born miraculously. Our Master was fearless in His unequalled power and peerless in His unequivocal teachings. Our Savior poured out His life willingly. For His final Passover offering, The Great Shepherd presented Himself as the unblemished Lamb of God. Unspeakably mocked and mortally wounded, Jesus died a death like no other. His unique death set the perfect stage for the ultimate miracle: death loses and life wins!

The time was 3 P.M. on Friday of Passover Week. Jesus had been writhing in pain on the center cross since 9 A.M. The deep darkness that had engulfed Jerusalem since noon had finally lifted. On that God-ordained Golgotha afternoon, the cruel Roman soldiers and the self-righteous Jewish leaders who lingered until His final breath were certain they had witnessed the end of the Jesus story. They were ready to close the book on The Word of God. The Roman centurion in charge of those keeping guard over Jesus made the declaration of the ages, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus made sure the body of The Son came down from the cross just before the sun went down and Sabbath be-

gan. In the books that Jesus writes, all of the ends become beginnings.

God made a way for His Son to obey the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day as holy. Jesus "rested" in death in the tomb from just before sunset on Friday until Sabbath was done at sunset on Saturday. Then, at some point in the early morning hours of Sunday, the first day of the week, Jesus came out of that tomb alive. The perfect standard timing of

that part of this story has always blessed my soul.

Matthew records that it was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who came

to the tomb at dawn on Sunday. They had both been there on Friday to witness His burial (Mt 27:61). They arrived to discover a brilliantly illuminated angel sitting on a rolled-away stone which revealed an empty tomb. They watched as the tomb guards fainted dead away from pure fright. The angel immediately calmed the fears of the women with those wonderful

words that stand as a witness to us: "He is not here for He has risen, just as He said! Remind the disciples to meet Him in Galilee." In Matthew 26:32, Jesus had told them that after He was raised, they were to meet Him in Galilee.

These two Marys ran from the empty tomb attempting to balance an explosive mixture of fear and great joy. Their emotions were off the scale in both directions! I just absolutely can NOT imagine

that moment. The gloom of Friday and the stark silence of Saturday coupled with the unbridled joy of Sunday should

reverberate in our souls as we remember the events of these days and celebrate them together on Resurrection morning.

LO and behold, on their way to inform the eleven disciples of this great news, they ran right into JESUS! They bowed down at His feet, holding on to Him in worship. He told them not to be afraid while reminding them of the plan for His

disciples to meet Him in Galilee. Then, their resurrected Savior sent them on their way with the best news of the greatest story ever told.

Springtime, songs, poetry, artwork: all strain together and still barely touch the wonder the story of the joy of new life in Christ. My favorite Resurrection Morning line of all time came from a four-year-old boy who said, "Miss Bee, Jesus' Daddy just woked Him up!"

Recently on a flight home from the Pacific Coast, I talked with a young man from Viet Nam. He professed his belief in Buddhism. He listened as I spoke of Jesus then I listened as he spoke of Buddha. We went back and forth the entire flight, sharing our beliefs. Neither of us budged an inch. As we headed for baggage claim, I gave him a note I had written on my Delta napkin. He smiled kindly, bowed and walked away. I wanted to weep. If he ever reads my note, this was the message: "Remember: Jesus is alive but Buddha is dead. That's the difference. If you ever change your mind and heart, here's my phone number." He hasn't called. I keep praying he will.

Brown is staff evangelist, First Church, Richland.

## Bible Studies for Life

with Becky Brown



## LIFEWAY

cont. from p. 1

will continue to create jobs and investment in the downtown core, much as LifeWay has done the past 120 years. This campus will be a lynchpin in the future development of downtown Nashville and has the potential

to become a new gateway to the central business district.

Miller said she looks forward to an ongoing partnership as "this valuable asset is reimagined and redeveloped."

Rainer said the buyers have said Uptown Nashville will "architecturally combine historic charm, paying homage to Nashville's roots, with

the finest quality modern and forward-thinking design. They pledge the mixed-use community will be environmentally green, technologically advanced, and service-oriented."

LifeWay has previously acknowledged that after a sale is closed, they will lease back a portion of the facilities until a new building is finished.

The sale involves LifeWay's 14.5-acre downtown Nashville complex, including more than one million square feet of office, warehouse, and parking space. About 1,100 of LifeWay's employees work in the downtown offices, utilizing about a third of the facility.

The organization also oversees 186 stores and 4,300 em-

ployees in 29 states.

LifeWay leaders began a preliminary feasibility study last August into selling the campus to relocate to what they described as facilities better suited to the ministry's future. The entity was founded in 1891 as the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

## Just for the Record



**HAMILTON CHURCH, MONROE ASSOCIATION.** recently licensed William Tiffin III to the gospel ministry. Tiffin is currently serving as minister of youth and music at the church. He is shown with pastor Robert Moore.



Jimmy Smith, pastor, **SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB**, with his wife, Tibethia, celebrated his 12th year as pastor.



The kids choir of **CALVARY CHURCH, SILVER CREEK**, presented their Easter musical, Happy Day.



Jeff Iorg, president, Golden Gate Seminary, was the guest speaker for the Weekend of Encouragement revival sponsored by **WEBSTER ASSOCIATION**. Iorg is shown with several area pastors.



Eleven members of the Daughters of the King women's ministry group at **TRINITY CHURCH, MONROE COUNTY**, met in January to kickoff their spring semester with a House Slipper tea. Everyone wore their house slippers and enjoyed drinking tea and eating scones.



The Mission Friends of **BRANCH CHURCH, MORTON**, sang special music Mar. 8. Shown are Gracelynn White, Luke Smith, Tristin El-Lington, and Elizabeth Bates.



**TOPEKA CHURCH, JAYESS**, celebrated the 20th anniversary of their pastor, Dale Authement, Feb. 15, along with a lunch and reception. Shown are Authement and Jim Futral, who brought the message and presented Authement with a certificate commemorating his service.

### In other Church News:

► Mize area churches, including First Church, New Sardis, Concord, Rose Hill, Maranatha, and Pine Grove, are hosting the 2nd annual Walk Through the Park - The Life of Jesus, Apr. 3, 5 - 8 p.m., at Mize Park. The event reenacts 14 scenes from the life of Jesus, from birth through resurrection.

► Carrollton Church, Carrollton, is sponsoring God Speaks, beginning Good Friday, Apr. 3, 9 a.m., and ending Easter, Apr. 5, at sunrise, on the courthouse grounds in Carrollton. Call the church at (662) 237-9351 to sign up for 15 minute intervals of reading the Bible.

► Pulaski Church, Pulaski, is honoring pastor Mickey Walls for 25 years of service Apr. 12, 10 a.m. - noon, followed by a potluck lunch. Homewood Quartet, music; Tim Fungay, speaker.

### CASKEY CONFERENCE

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